

ANALYSIS OF MOZART SYMPHONY

No. 39 in E-flat

WILLIAM BILLETER

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by

William Billeter

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF MOZART'S SYMPHONIES
TO THE THREE OF THE YEAR 1788

Johann Christian Bach settled in London in 1762 as an Italian-trained musician. He became quite friendly with Mozart during the latter's London visit in 1764-65. Even though Mozart was a lad of only ten years of age, he studied Johann Christian Bach's symphonies and was influenced by them. His early Salzburg symphonies strongly indicate this. Johann Christian Bach had been a student of Martini and Sammartini. They wrote in the typical Italian "Sinfonia" style which he imitated.

The Italian "Sinfonia" was in reality only an overture in one movement with contrasting themes and was used in concerts for the opening and closing of a program. The themes were not developed.

According to Einstein, the enchanting grace and amiability of Johann Christian Bach's music distinguishes it from that of his Italian masters. Bach never plumbed the depths, but neither did he remain wholly on the surface. A favorite device of his was to achieve a contrast of forte and piano within the very first tones of his works, a device Mozart used frequently.

After 1765 Bach went through a development Mozart did not follow; no early symphony of Mozart's corresponds to Bach's brilliant Symphonies for Double Orchestra. Geniuses assimilate only what is congenial to them.

In Mozart's works, the Italian system of fast-slow-fast took precedence over the French style of grave-fast-grave. However, Mozart and others eventually opened some of their symphonies with a slow introduction of which the symphony in E-flat K.543 is a good example. The Germans introduced the minuet to the symphony in 1760; Mozart followed this example.

In 1766 at the age of ten Mozart wrote a symphony K.76 which shows breadth and power in this medium hitherto unknown. He employs in this symphony two oboes, two bassoons, two horns, and a division in the violas.

During 1767 Mozart wrote many cassations, i.e. little symphonies in seven or eight movements for the embellishment of the court feasts, family parties, etc. These cassations, which might be called suites, were very popular and highly esteemed in Salzburg. However, at this time one already finds the addition of episodes to his concluding rondos.

In 1768 Mozart went to Vienna where he was influenced by the hearty style of Haydn.

In the years 1770-71 Mozart visited Italy. As a result an Italian influence was added to his Salzburgian style. However, one also begins to recognize the future instrumental style of the master.

The symphony in E-flat K.132 shows bizzarrerie, boldness, tender delicacy, whirlwind force in the finale, and strength and power in the design. The romantic "Sturm und Drang" period which swept the continent made itself manifest in Mozart's C major symphony of the year 1772. The first movement of a G major symphony K.129 composed the same year seems influenced by Bach, while the second and third movements already breathe the spirit of Haydn.

In 1773 Mozart returned to Austria where further contact with Haydn's works created in him a reawakened interest in polyphony.

Haydn had just finished several quartets ending in fugues. However, Haydn was influenced by the Italian-French "Gallant" style which often produced a superficial effect in his music. Mozart was influenced by this style from 1775-79, a style created for amusement rather than emotional expressiveness.

In 1777-78 Mozart became acquainted with the clarinet in the Mannheim orchestra, and was impressed by the extended use of the woodwinds in general. The woodwind section of the Mannheim orchestra consisted of well known virtuosi. Mozart made use of the clarinet, an instrument of which he became fond, in his symphony of 1778 commissioned by Le Gros of Paris. The precision

and discipline of Le Gros' orchestra impressed the young composer, especially when it was conducted by Cannabich, the director of the Mannheim orchestra. In Mannheim he also became aware of the use of expressive dynamic shadings, which, however, both he and Haydn adopted very slowly. Mozart was also influenced by the Mannheim style of blending the woodwinds and strings.

In 1781 counterpoint became an important form of expression for Mozart. The Linz symphony of 1783 is the first of the truly Viennese symphonies. It begins with a solemn Haydenish introduction. The second Vienna symphony K.425 is in C major. The third, also composed in 1783 in G major K.444 reveals a Haydn influence.

In 1786 he wrote the "Prague" symphony K.504, a symphony without a minuet. The contrapuntal imitation foreshadows the overture to the "Zauberfloete". Saint Foix says: "Mozart here (in this symphony) speaks no longer the language we have met in his former compositions; we get the impression that this language is entirely his own creation, and we know of no musician who might have been able to reveal its elements to him. Perhaps, if we were forced to choose one, the name of Clementi would again present itself most readily to our

mind."¹ The lacerating rhythms suggest struggle and energy rather than happiness.

According to Einstein, Mozart's symphonies up to 1772 were largely ceremonial, buffo, Italian. With him the symphony gradually advanced from the decorative to the expressive, from the external to the internal, from mere ceremonial to spiritual avowal. The symphonies of 1773-74 K.183, K.200, K.201 show a finer development of thematic material, a new agitation in place of ceremonial character and new articulation in structure, foreshadowing the three great ones of 1788.

A considerable advancement in depth and design is noticable in Mozart with the advent of "Don Giovanni" in 1787. In this same year Mozart's third child died, a fact which might have helped to mature him spiritually. The Andante of the E-flat symphony K.543 foreshadows the intensively soulful, beautifully meditative slow movement of the A major Clarinet Concerto K.622 which he wrote in one of his most trying years.

1 - The Symphonies of Mozart, Saint-Fox Ch. Xll P. 99

QUALITIES OF THE E-FLAT SYMPHONY K.543

Of the E-flat major symphony Jahn says that it is a triumph of euphony. Mozart has employed clarinets here, and their union with the horns and bassoons produces that full, mellow tone which is so important an element in the modern orchestra. The addition of a flute gives it clearness and light, and trumpets endow it with brilliancy and freshness. It will suffice to remind the reader of the beautiful passage in the Andante, where the wind instruments enter in imitation, or of the charming trio in the minuet, to make manifest the importance of the choice of tone-colouring in giving characteristic expression. The feeling of pride in the consciousness of power shines through the magnificent introduction of noble, dignified composure. The allegro expresses purest pleasure, now in frolicsome joy, now in active excitement. Some shadows appear, it is true, in the Andante, but they only serve to throw into stronger relief the mild serenity of a mind that communes with itself and rejoices in the peace which fills it. The last movement is full of a mocking joviality more frequent with Haydn than with Mozart, but it does not lose its hold on the more refined and elevated tone of the preceding movements. Startling harmonic and rhythmical surprises are evident.

Alfred Einstein sees in the unusual song-theme of

the Allegro (1st movement) a brotherhood that symbolizes Freemasonry. He further states that it is impossible to interpret the Andante in A-flat (2nd movement) in the sense of the letter of April 4, 1787, addressed to Leopold. This letter refers to death, that best and truest friend of man, of which the thought was not only no longer terrifying to Mozart, but was indeed very soothing and consoling. The cheerfulness of the last movement reminds us somewhat of Haydn.

Richard Wagner compares the expressiveness and ardour of the E-flat symphony with Beethoven's seventh. Saint Foix says: "The E-flat symphony was Wagner's choice to illustrate the difference between the performance of the symphony by an inspired artist and the indifferent interpretations, colorless and lifeless, giving the impression of soulless music, that we are offered."¹

The Finale seems to him quite as important as the first movement. He sees in it a very eloquent example of those allegros wherein the figuration outweighs the melody.

1 - The Symphonies of Mozart by Saint-Foix Ch.XIV,P.128

Quoting Wagner, he adds, 'It is an orgy of pure rhythm.' These famous words of Wagner apply as much to the Finale of Mozart's E-flat, as to that of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. In one of the most charming passages from his memoirs, entitled "Ein Gluecklicher Abend", we read the following: '... We had, among other lovely things, Mozart's E-flat and Beethoven's Seventh.'¹

Saint-Foix compares the Introduction of the E-flat symphony with that of the "Don Juan" overture in its bold dissonances. He considers it the most romantic symphony of the famous three.

Jahn considers the E-flat symphony charming, the G minor passionate, the Jupiter serene. He considers these three symphonies as musical monuments of the 18th century. So much growth in Mozart's symphonic style in such a few years must be primarily attributed to his genius. Rossini says: "Mozart is the only musician who had as much genius as knowledge."²

1 - "The Symphonies of Mozart" by Saint-Foix Ch.XIV, P.129

2 - "Life of Mozart" by Jahn Vol. II, Ch.32, P.421

INSTRUMENTATION

Saint-Foix believes that the lack of oboes in the E-flat symphony is due to its inconvenient key for these instruments. This is likely untrue since other works by Mozart in the same key utilize oboes. Mozart wrote a "Sinfonia Concertante" for the Mannheim Virtuosi in E-flat major for flute, oboe, horn and bassoon in 1778. Oboes are also included in the scores of the "Great Mass in G minor" and the "Zauberfloete", of which a number of soli and choruses of both, and the overture of the latter are in keys with three flats.

It is likely that Mozart chose the clarinets instead of the oboes for their mellow effect with horns and bassoons, which he did not wish to brighten with oboes.

The reason for omitting the oboes might also have been an economic one. His lack of full instrumentation for most of his symphonies may be attributed to the fact that much of his music often written for not too wealthy patrons, required a modest instrumentation in order to make the cost of their production and performance not prohibitive. Mozart added clarinets to his G minor symphony for the Paris orchestra upon the demand of the director of this organization who could afford the cost of the added instrumentation. As a result of this addition it became necessary for Mozart to alter the oboe parts.

FORM AND ANALYSIS OF THE E-FLAT MAJOR SYMPHONY

Mozart utilizes descending or ascending scales in all movements except the minuet. This may be a means of relating all three movements to each other. However, scales are a common occurrence in Mozart's compositions as well as other contemporary composers of that period.

Introduction and First Movement

He opens the introduction with forte chords followed by piano passages in typical Mannheim style. The introduction ends on an up-beat and is the dominant to the first theme. The first theme also enters on an up-beat. The result of these two unaccented beats coming together creates the impression that both measures, the last of the Introduction and the first of the Allegro form actually one measure and should be conducted accordingly. Conducting the afore-mentioned two measures as one three-beat measure is facilitated by the fact that the first measure of the Allegro equals approximately half of the preceding measure in duration. In this manner Mozart accomplishes a transition from the majestic Introduction in Adagio to the dolce character of the following Allegro in an exquisite manner.

The first theme of the Allegro is not the usual vigorous one, but smooth and warm, more of the second theme type.

Violin

Cello & Bass

The musical score is handwritten on five staves. The first two staves are labeled 'Violin' and the next two are labeled 'Cello & Bass'. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature is 3/4. The music features various notes, rests, and slurs, with some accidentals (sharps) appearing in the Cello & Bass part.

This theme is followed by a powerful theme which Saint-Foix calls a ritornello with a sort of gypsy rhythm:



The ritornello and the following part with descending scales serves as a transition. A transition is often understood to be merely a preparation for the second theme entrance. Here the transition embodies part of the spirit of the first theme and leaves it gradually to form a bond between the first and second themes. Motivic material which influences the entire movement is also evident.

The first part of the transitional episode (the ritornello) while completely dissimilar in spirit, is a partial inversion of the first theme.

At measure 64 an important motivic idea is introduced which is employed in the closing theme at measure 125. A variation of this idea is found in measure 89 and a simplification of it in measure 120. It may have had its inception in the composer's mind at measure 35 in the cello and bass or even in the first three measures of the introduction from E-flat to D. In fact this descending half-step idea seems to be the basic generative force from which the entire movement is derived.

The first two divisions (each four measures long) of the first theme of the first movement end with this descending half-step. In the third and fourth divisions it is inverted. In all four divisions prominence is given half-step by extending the duration of the first note of the half-step to a half-note (the neighboring are quarter notes) and entering the same on the down-beat.

In measure 113 of the first movement the descending scale is modified to relate it to the descending half-step motive by beginning a new step on the note on which the other step ended. The descent is, however, diatonic so that some descending steps are whole-steps and some are half-steps. This treatment of the descending scale occurs again in measures 118, 150, and 159.

In the measures 181-183 (the return to the recapit-

ulation) the descending half-step stands out prominently; the flute plays it in a faster rhythm than the clarinets and bassoons.

The image shows a handwritten musical score for a section titled "Theme II". The score is written on five staves, each beginning with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The first staff is labeled "Violin" and "Flute". It contains a long, sweeping melodic line with a descending half-step at the end, followed by a shorter, more rhythmic phrase. The second staff is also labeled "Violin" and continues the melodic line. The third staff continues the melodic line. The fourth staff continues the melodic line. The fifth staff is labeled "Clar." and contains a more rhythmic, arpeggiated figure. The notation is handwritten and includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals.

For the closing section Mozart utilizes the generative motive with ascending scales.

The development section begins with the generative motive followed by the second theme. This is followed by the generative motive and arpeggio figures. The generative motive leads to the recapitu-

lation which follows the classical style without innovations and with the second theme now in the tonic key.

Second Movement

While in the first movement the bass does not always duplicate the cello, their parts are here in unison, but the basses rest occasionally where the cellos play. In Mozart's later works a more interesting orchestration for woodwinds is evidenced which is also true of this symphony particularly in the second movement.

As the mechanism of the woodwinds improved and virtuosis explored their technical possibilities, composers no longer used them merely for chordal fill-in tones as was still considerably the case with the horns and trumpets, since the latter were still without valves. The two-valve horn was not invented until 1813 and the three-valve horn not until 1830. ¹

The second movement is a rondo but it is strongly related to the first movement in design. Its strong rhythmical second theme corresponds in vitality to the episodic theme of the first movement. Saint-Foix might also have called the second theme of the second movement a ritornello,

1 - Teuchert & Haupt, Musik-Instrumentenkunde Vol.III,P.3

since it serves the same purpose of contrast between the first and third themes as the episode of the first movement.

The first theme is given to the strings the first time. Woodwinds and brasses do not enter until the completion of the first theme. There the woodwinds and horns enter with a two-measure transition utilizing the third theme. Thereafter follows the vigorous second theme which is modulatory both times it appears. From its f minor entry it modulates to B-flat major. The excitability of this theme is augmented by syncopations of the second violins and violas.

At measure 64 a transition follows in which the woodwinds enter with the first motive of the first theme and alternate with the lower strings which answer with the second motive of the first theme. Thereafter follow four measures of a theme closely related to the ritornellic (second) theme and repeated in descending sequences which end abruptly when the second motive of the first theme enters and forms a preparation for the entrance of the third theme. The third theme is given to the woodwinds; the strings accompany chordally. This rather melancholic theme is followed by a two-measure interlude played by the violins, after which it is restated in the dominant statement.

The repetition of this theme after a brief interlude as well as the canonic treatment, is unusual. When this theme is later repeated again by the woodwinds, it is entered in D-flat and repeated after the same two-measure interlude by the strings. The repetition is again in the dominant which is the major key of the movement.

At measure 68 four measures of the first theme are again scored for violins, however, the woodwinds continue it for four measures, while the strings participate polyphonically with a theme based on both the third and the first themes. The middle section of the theme is given to the strings now accompanied by the woodwinds in descending scales in thirds. The repeated first section of the theme which follows, modulates to an entry of the second theme in b minor. This theme is again modulatory. It modulates from b minor to E-flat major, traversing a minor, F major, D-flat major, A-flat minor, and F major.

The transition which follows is similar to the first transition, but the flute is added to the other woodwinds and the violas and second violins are given descending thirds, while only the first violins remain on the same note.

After the third theme the first theme is repeated but incompletely. After the first section of the first theme

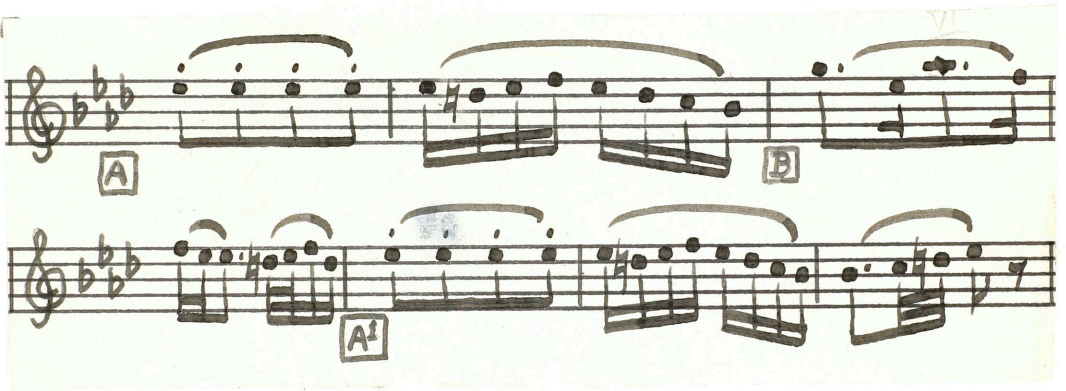
the Coda starts with a theme based on the countermelody to the first theme and also played by the first violins. After three measures this theme is reenforced in unison by the woodwinds. The second violins are given a theme based on the first one, the violas a simplification of the coda theme, while the cellos and basses are given a theme based on the second motive of the first theme. This short but gorgeously polyphonic Coda concludes the second movement.

Andante con Moto

A Motive I Motive II IV

I **B** **Via, Cello & Bass**

Violin **A¹** **I**



Third Movement

The minuet is one of Mozart's best known. In contrast to the stately first section, the trio is in form of a "Laendler", a country dance still very popular in Austrian Tyrol and Eastern Switzerland.

In this trio the partial echoing of the clarinet by the flute has a charming effect.

As in measure 113 of the first movement, the step-like descending scale occurs again in measures 39-42 of the Minuet.

Fourth Movement

The Finale is in the sonata form. The frolicsome, lively theme is introduced by the violins and at measure 10 augmented by the woodwinds somewhat simplified, while the trumpets fill in and the horns play the ever typical duet of the valveless horn.

At measure 16, the beginning of the transition, the violins continue with rapid chordal passages, while the lower strings, the brasses, and the woodwinds accompany with eighth-note chords.

At measure 43 the second theme is stated by the first violins. It greatly resembles the first theme. At measure 44 the woodwinds state a $1\frac{1}{2}$ measure section of the first theme, likewise when the theme is repeated at measure 49. The repeated theme modulates to f-sharp minor to enable an entry of a syncopated eight-measure theme in that key. The second violins accompany with figured chords, the violas with sustained thirds, while

the bassoons and the flute enter alternately with the first measure of the first theme.

A vigorous theme occurs in the First Movement between the first and second themes; in the Second Movement between the first and third themes, and in the Finale a vigorous syncopated theme occurs also, but after the second theme which is much like the first.

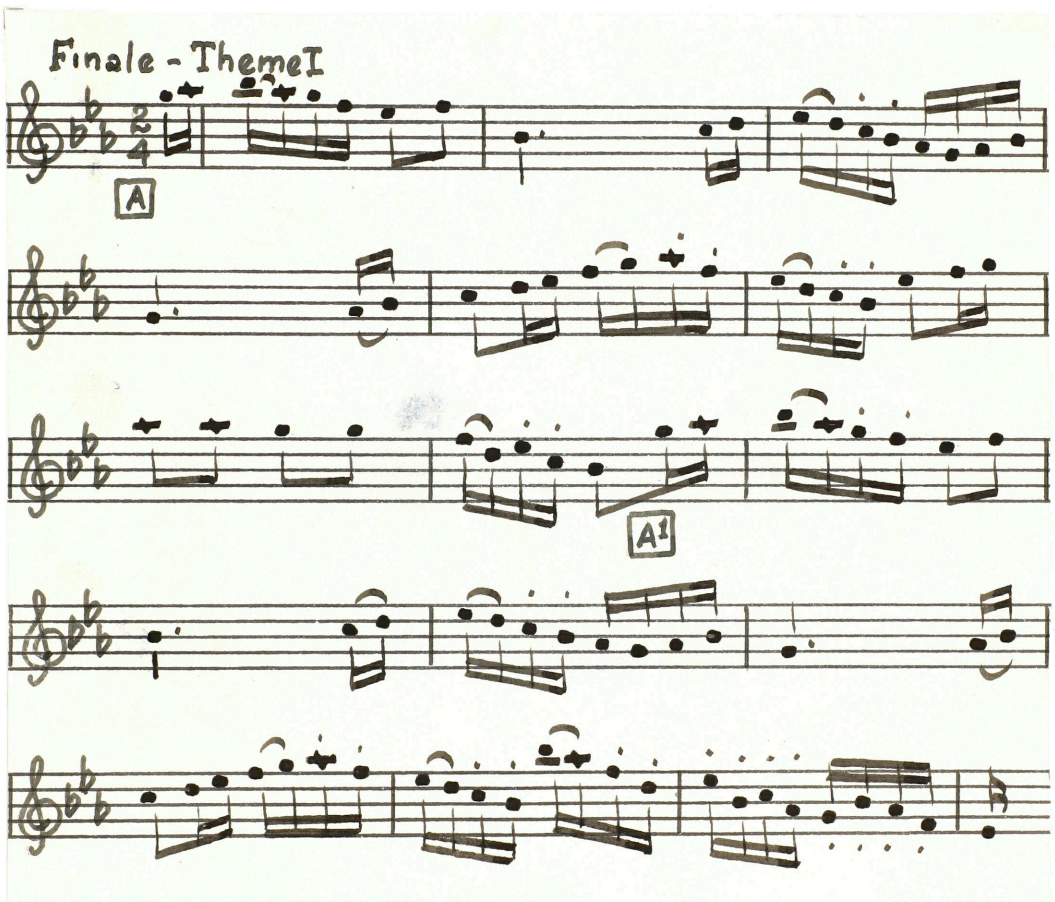
At measure 63 a lively closing theme is stated by the violins. At measure 79 a pause by the orchestra which stops on a 6-4 chord creates an anticipation of a cadenza which does not follow. The woodwinds continue with the ever-recurring motive of the first theme, which after six measures is continued by the strings.

The entire development section from measure 106 to measure 153 consists of the above-mentioned motive, stated alternately by higher and lower strings, then in unison with the woodwinds participating with chords and chordal passages. The whole section is unusually modulatory. An abrupt pause occurs in measure 138. This time the strings continue with the ever-recurring motive instead of the woodwinds.

The recapitulation is regular. At measure 252 the descending scale pattern by the violins strongly resemble measures 39-42 of the Minuet.

The generative descending half-step occurring in measures 29, 56, 58, 65, 113, 118, 120, of the First Movement is also present in measures 90 and 96 of the Finale. This may well be a unifying force.

The Coda starts with measure 238 and ends abruptly and unexpectedly "a la Haydn, with the initial rhythm of the movement".¹



1 - "The Symphonies of Mozart" by Saint-Foix Chap. XIV, P.120

Finale Theme II



Mozart Symphony

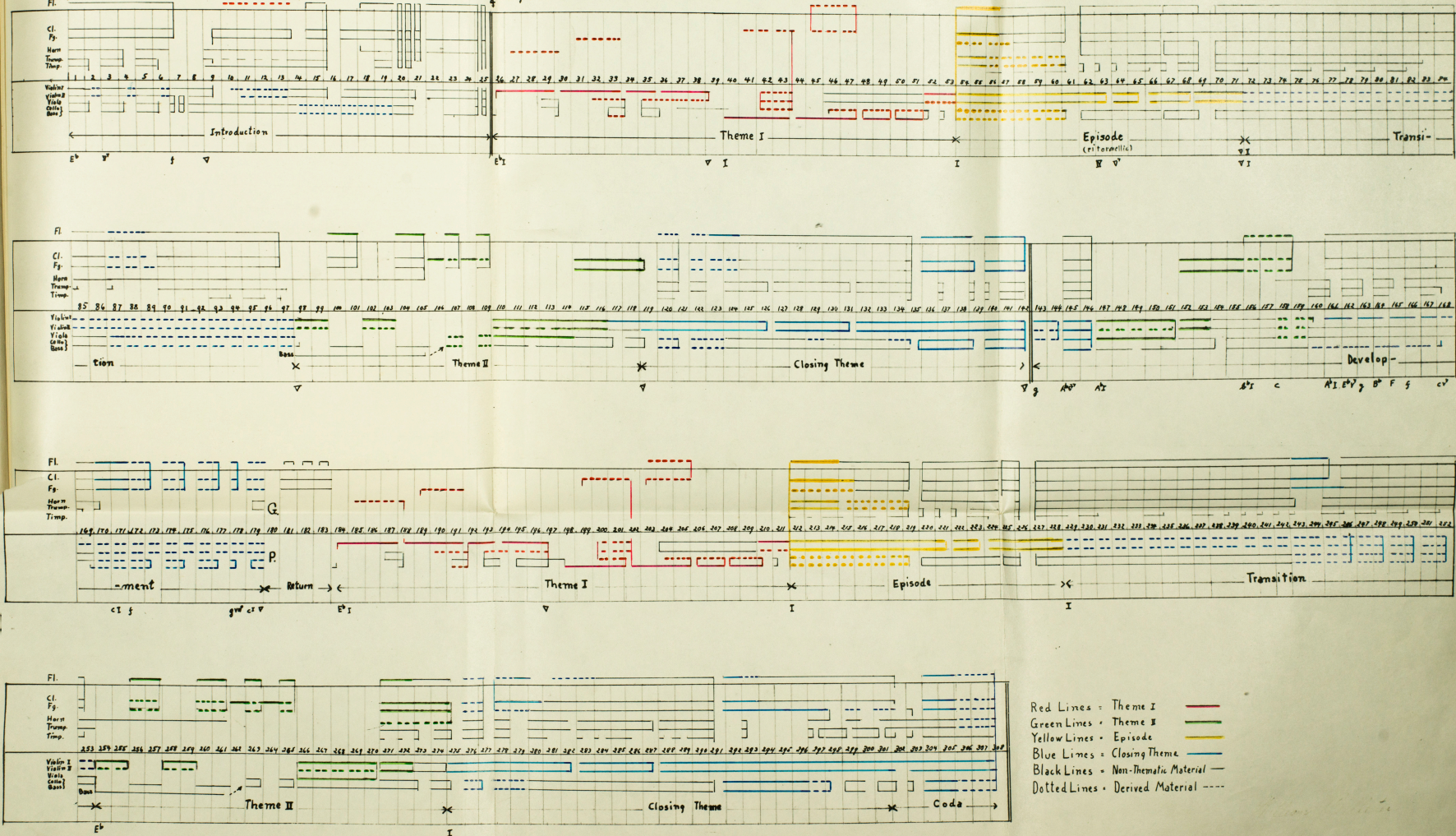
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First Movement

Sonata form

$\frac{4}{4}$ Adagio

$\frac{3}{4}$ Allegro Mod.



In the Score at Measure 142 a repetition is indicated to Measure 26

Second Movement

Rondo Form ABCABCA - Coda

$\frac{3}{4}$ Andante

Flute
Cl.
Pg
Horns

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83

Violin I
Violin II
Cello
Bass

C
A^b
Th. I
E^b
A^b
I 5^b I
Th. II
B^b
Transition
E^b
Th. III
Trms. X_A
Th. I repeated
A^b

Measure 6 repeats to Measure 1
Measure 27 repeats to Measure 9
Measure 6 repeated slightly varied
Measure 27 repeats to Measure 9

[illegible]

Third Movement

Minuet Form

3 Allegretto

Allegretto

Flute
Cl.
Fp.
Horns
Trumpets
Timp.

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Bass + Cello

Theme I

Coda

Theme II

Measure 16 repeats to Measure 1

Measure 44 repeats to Measure 17

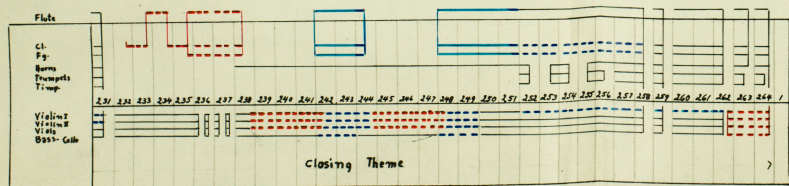
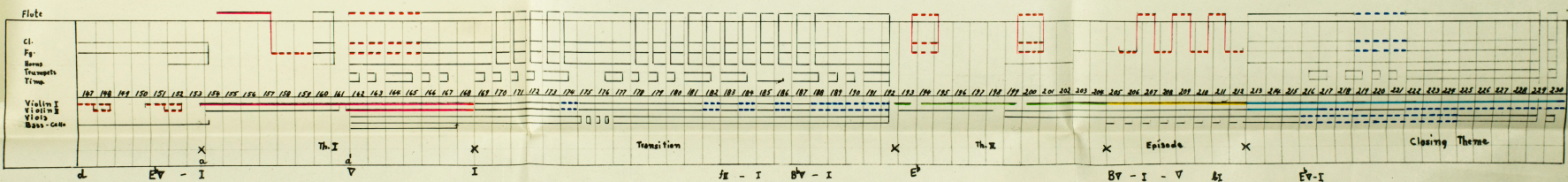
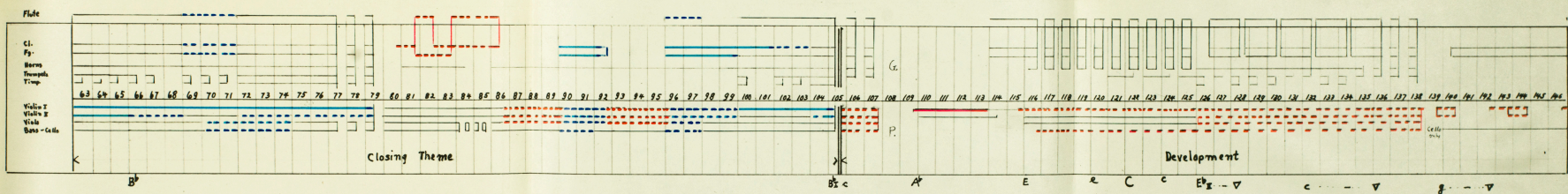
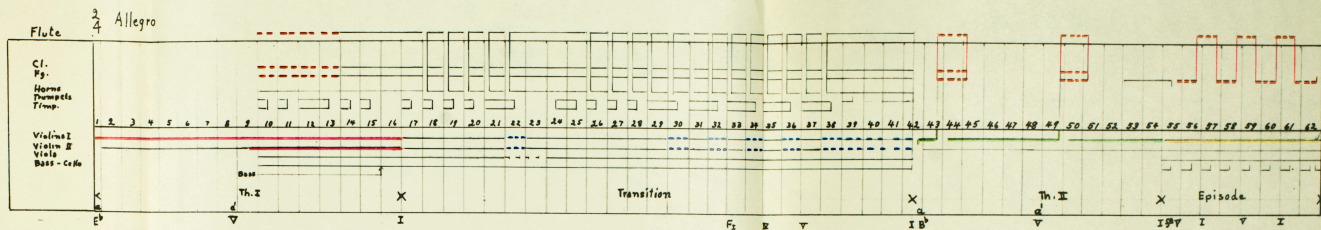
Measure 52 repeats to Measure 45

Measure 68 repeats to Measure 53

In some scores a first and second ending is given of Measure 52

Wm Diller

Mozart Symphony
No. 39 E^b
Finale Allegro
Sonata Form



- Red Lines = Th. I
- Green Lines = Th. II
- Yellow Lines = Episoda
- Blue Lines = Closing Th.
- Black Lines = Non-Thematic Material
- Dotted Lines = Derived Material